

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for packaging a loaf of bread, which method comprises:
feeding the loaf through an open first end of an inner preformed bag having a closed second end opposite the first end;

sealing the first end of the inner bag to close such first end and heat shrinking the inner bag to closely enclose the loaf; and

inserting the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf through an open end of a preformed outer bag and closing such open end of the outer bag.

2. The method defined in Claim 1, including inserting the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf endwise, second end last, through the open end of the preformed outer bag, such that the second end of the inner bag is adjacent to the open end of the outer bag.

3. The method defined in Claim 2, including providing bag-weakening opening means in the second end of the inner bag such that the opening means is presented to a user upon reopening of the open end of the outer bag.

4. The method defined in Claim 3, including providing a row of bag-weakening perforations in the second end of the inner bag for manual opening of the inner bag by a consumer.

5. The method defined in Claim 3, including providing a horizontal row of bag-weakening perforations in the second end of the inner bag for manual opening of the inner bag by a consumer.

6. The method defined in Claim 3, including providing a bag-weakening score in the second end of the inner bag for manual opening of the inner bag by a consumer.

7. The method defined in Claim 3, including providing a horizontal bag-weakening score in the second end of the inner bag for manual opening of the inner bag by a consumer.

8. The method defined in Claim 1, including performing the method automatically, including feeding the loaf through an open first end of an inner preformed bag having a closed second end opposite the first end by a first automatic

bagging machine, and inserting the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf through an open end of a preformed outer bag by a second automatic bagging machine, such inserting by the second bagging machine being performed by moving the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf endwise, second end last, through the open end of the preformed outer bag.

9. The method defined in Claim 8, including automatically turning the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf between the first automatic bagging machine and the second automatic bagging machine.

10. A packaged product comprising a loaf of bread enclosed in an inner heat shrunk bag having a preformed closed end and a gathered and sealed end opposite the preformed closed end, such heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf being contained within a separate outer bag having a closed first end and an openable second end.

11. The packaged product defined in Claim 10, in which the preformed closed end of the inner bag is gusseted.

12. The packaged product defined in Claim 10, in which the preformed closed end of the heat shrunk inner bag is adjacent to the openable end of the outer bag.

13. The packaged product defined in Claim 12, in which the preformed closed end of the heat shrunk inner bag has bag-weakening means for manual opening of the inner bag.

14. The packaged product defined in Claim 13, in which the preformed closed end of the inner bag has a row of perforations for opening of the inner bag.

15. The packaged product defined in Claim 13, in which the closed end of the inner bag has a bag-weakening score for manual opening of the inner bag.

16. The method of supplying bags which comprises forming a length of heat shrinkable bag web material such that the web material has a top sheet, a bottom sheet, and a V-fold connecting the top sheet and bottom sheet, cutting individual bag blanks from the unrolled web material, sealing side portions of the bag blanks to form bags having closed ends gusseted in the area of the V-fold and opposite sides

extending therefrom to an open end of the bag, and weakening a section of the gusseted end of the bag for assisting manual opening of the bag at the gusseted end.

17. The method defined in Claim 16, including forming a row of perforations in the gusseted end of the bag to weaken it for manual opening thereof.

18. The method defined in Claim 17, in which the perforations are formed in a row extending lengthwise of the V-fold.

19. The method defined in Claim 17, including scoring the gusseted end of the bag to weaken it for manual opening thereof.

20. The method defined in Claim 19, in which the scoring extends lengthwise of the V-fold.

21 A bag comprising a blank of heat shrinkable bag web material having a top sheet, a bottom sheet and a V-fold joining the top sheet and the bottom sheet and forming a closed end, the blank having opposite sealed sides extending from the closed end to an open end of the bag blank, and bag-weakening means in the closed end of the bag blank for manual opening thereof.

22 The bag defined in Claim 21, in which the bag-weakening means includes a row of perforations.

23 The bag defined in Claim 21, in which the bag-weakening means includes a scoring of the web material.

24. An automatic packaging system for a loaf of bread comprising:
a first automatic bagger for receiving the loaf and for inserting the loaf endwise through an open first end of an inner preformed bag having a closed second end opposite the first end;

an automatic gatherer and sealer, automatically receiving the inner bagged loaf from the first bagger, and having means for gathering and sealing the first end of the inner bag;

a heat shrink component, automatically receiving the inner bagged loaf from the gatherer and sealer, for heat shrinking the inner bag to closely enclose the loaf; and

a second automatic bagger automatically receiving the heat shrunk inner bag and enclosed loaf for insertion thereof through an open end of a preformed outer bag.

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